

How to Create a Consistent Brand

FOR YOUR CAUSE

Related topics:

- How to customize your message
- How to evaluate your brand



This worksheet is a complementary guide to help you put into practice the advice found in our “How to Create a Consistent Brand for Your Cause” video. Each 3-minute video is packed with information and is designed to be watched multiple times—even while you are completing this worksheet.

WHAT Create and maintain a consistent brand that strengthens your cause.

TIME REQUIRED 8 hours of development, ongoing training and follow-up

WHO IS INVOLVED This process is best completed by the communications staff and who you need to train.

Building a brand that distills the essence of your cause and conveys a clear and consistent identity through all your communications and messengers can be challenging. A strong brand makes your organization recognizable and helps people understand who you are and what you do.

This worksheet walks you through three steps that help ensure you are maintaining a consistent brand for your cause.

1. Create a style guide
2. Create a resource library
3. Train your staff

Here are some examples:



Article: [Guide to Nonprofit Branding and Examples](#)

Style Guide: [Yale University Visual Style Guide](#)

Style Guide & Library: [Knight Foundation](#)

Bonus: At the end of this worksheet, we share the fantastic gumbo recipe that inspired our video!

→ For more help, contact Cause Communications at info@CauseComm.org or visit CauseCommunications.org/tools to see other Bite-Size Courses.

Made possible through the support of the Annenberg Foundation, the Ahmanson Foundation, Dwight Stuart Youth Fund, and the Joseph Drown Foundation.



How to Create a Consistent Brand

FOR YOUR CAUSE

Once you have completed the following three steps, you will be well on your way to ensuring your brand is consistent across all platforms and communications.

1. Create a style guide:

A style guide is a reference document that provides guidance on visual identity, language, templates, grammar, and approved statements. These should be accessible online so that staff members are not tempted to recreate your logo from scratch if they are in a hurry. Include in your style guide the things that are important to your brand, including:

- Program and organization-specific: What do you call your programs, projects, or facilities?
- Your organization's name (spelling, abbreviations, or acronyms that work)
- Names of your programs and services (including naming nomenclature for your key programs, projects, and facilities)
- Your address, phone number, emails, website, and social channels (e.g., should you begin writing your url with "http://" or simply with "www")
- Your tagline
- Guidelines for the use of your organization's logo and graphic identity system
- Consult the graphic designer(s) who created the logo and accompanying materials
- Logo and graphic identity: Where does the logo sit on a page? What is the relationship with other items or information on a page? Is it twice as large as the address on your letterhead? Are there multiple logos? Which logo appears where and when? Are there certain colors that should be used? You will also need to determine headline versus body font, font sizes, line height, spacing, and colors. Be sure to include web alternatives. Include guidance on the typeface your cause will use in its communications beyond the logo.
- Your positioning statement: The two or three sentences that establish your position in the philanthropic world and how it should be included, as a whole, in most communications
- Talking points for staff and board members: Key messages that briefly cover the who, what, when, where, and how of your group and how they should be incorporated in most communications
- Person, tone, and voice
- Word style preferences (preferred spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviations; e.g., web site vs. website, grant making vs. grantmaking)
- Any variations to your in-house style for Web or other electronic communications
- Words not to use
- A glossary of terms specific to your organization or its sphere
- Frequently misused or misspelled words
- A comprehensive, supplemental reference (such as the *Associated Press Stylebook* or *The Chicago Manual of Style*) and the preferred dictionary for issues not addressed by your in-house style guide
- What terms do you use or not use to describe your work or programs?



How to Create a Consistent Brand

FOR YOUR CAUSE

2. Create a resource library:

A resource library is a single place or repository that houses materials and resources to create branded communications pieces. The library can be a folder on a shared drive if it is needed for internal teams only or can be a microsite that can easily be shared with volunteers, contractors, and partners.

When assembling materials for your Resource Library, think about what types of resources will be helpful to your staff when it comes to your brand identity and maintaining a consistent brand across multiple platforms. Consider including examples of photos; logos; graphic elements; media ads, and any additional resource you might find helpful. It can be helpful to include a repository of acceptable images and fonts for your cause. This library should be accessible to all those who are developing marketing/branding materials or communicating with various audiences.





How to Create a Consistent Brand

FOR YOUR CAUSE

3. Train your staff:

Putting in the time to train anyone who is communicating externally for your cause now will help you save time for those creating new materials and save time down the line when signing off on materials for your organization. Identifying the “brand guardian” who people can go to with questions is important. Periodic reminders that highlight specific resources or portions of the guide and library can be helpful for keeping brand consistency a priority.

Conduct a training session that starts with an explanation of what a brand is (messages, design standards, style guide, processes, and templates) and why it’s important to be consistent with its use. Hand out a few examples of past marketing materials (or create a few) that have a branding error. Give staff a few minutes alone or in pairs to identify the errors (can be in style, color, size, or text). Award a prize for each error identified and explain how it could be fixed.

Make sure everyone knows where to find the style guide and resource library. One way to encourage usage is to create a surprise file with directions to contact you for a reward and include it in the library. The first person to find it can receive recognition and a prize.





How to Create a Consistent Brand

FOR YOUR CAUSE

→ BONUS

Great big gumbo with chicken and sausage

From "A Good Day for Soup," by Jeannette Ferrary and Louise Fiszer

- 2 chickens (about 3 pounds each)
- Flour for dredging
- 1 pound andouille sausage or other highly seasoned smoked sausage, sliced ¼ inch thick
- Vegetable oil, as needed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 4 scallions, trimmed and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce, or to taste
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes
- 10 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup sliced okra
- 2 cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen and thawed
- ½ cup rice
- Salt and pepper

Cut each chicken into 8 pieces and dredge in flour. In a large, heavy nonreactive pot, cook sausage until fat is rendered and sausage is brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside. Cook chicken pieces in the same pot until brown all over. This may have to be done in 2 batches. Remove chicken and set aside. Add oil to pan if necessary and stir in onion, celery, green pepper, scallions, and garlic. Cook until soft, about 5 minutes, and stir in flour. Cook until flour turns light brown, about 4 minutes. Add pepper sauce and tomatoes, and cook until bubbly. Add stock, okra, and corn. Bring to a boil. Meanwhile, remove chicken from bones and cut into small pieces. Add to soup with reserved sausage and rice. Reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes. Taste for salt and pepper and serve.

Serves 12